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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 9523  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 2978  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5469  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1463  
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CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - NEW US IRAQ POLICY - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Friday morning's moderate Tokyo Shimbun front-paged a press conference Thursday by Secretary of State Rice and Defense Secretary Gates at the White House. The daily said that Gates, referring to the new US Iraq policy, disclosed that he proposed to President Bush that the Army bolster its ranks by 65,000 and the Marines by 27,000 over the next five years to deal with a prolonged fight against terrorism.

11. "Is New US Iraq Policy a Turning Point?" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri editorialized (1/12): "...President Bush announced a new Iraq policy, which calls for the deployment of an additional 21,500 troops. The question is whether this new plan will actually work, as the situation in Iraq is deteriorating rapidly. More than 23,000 Iraqis lost their lives in 2006 to sectarian violence, with nearly 80 percent of those deaths occurring in the latter half of the year. The US military death toll has also climbed past 3,000 since the start of the war. The new Iraq policy was presented as a remedy to this difficult situation.... The latest opinion poll in the US showed that 61 percent of Americans oppose sending additional troops, while only 36 percent approve.... Amid these unfavorable conditions, the president will have to prove that the new plan will be effective."

12. "New US Iraq Policy Fraught with Uncertainties" An editorial in the business-oriented Nihon Keizai commented (1/12): "President Bush has announced his new Iraq policy. While the new policy calls for the dispatch of more than 20,000 additional US troops to improve Iraq's security, it also seeks to have the Iraqi government take the lead, with Bush saying that 'America's commitment is not open-ended.'... Although the president wanted to show Americans light at the end of the tunnel, no one has been

able to come up with a means of breaking the deadlock in Iraq. Most of the goals spelled out in the new policy are simply targets for efforts to be made. The new Iraq policy is fraught with dilemmas and uncertainties."

¶3. "Dispatch of Additional Troops a Dangerous Gamble" The liberal Asahi editorialized (1/12): "President Bush's live TV address was reminiscent of the speech made by then President Nixon announcing a plan to escalate the US military commitment to bring an end to the quagmire that was the Vietnam War. Bush acknowledged mistakes in the Iraq war, saying: 'Where mistakes have been made, the responsibility rests with me.' Nonetheless, he disclosed plans to send more than 20,000 additional troops to bolster the 130,000 already in Iraq and did not touch on the timing of a withdrawal.... We regard the troop surge as a dangerous gamble. The White House has so far sent additional troops to Iraq on three occasions, each time proving unsuccessful. The president would like to say that this is America's last chance. But the past four years should have made clear that Iraq cannot be reconstructed via military force alone. In some respects, the US military presence itself is behind the deteriorating situation.... The US was forced into a shameful withdrawal from Vietnam. Will the same thing happen again in Iraq?"

DONOVAN